

Standard 6-6

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the age of European exploration and settlement in the New World.

6-6.2 Compare the incentives of the various European countries to explore and settle new lands. (P, G, E)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

In the 3rd grade, students explained the motives behind the exploration of South Carolina by the English, the Spanish, and the French (3-2.1). Students explained the transfer of the institution of slavery into South Carolina from the West Indies, including the slave trade and the role of African Americans in the developing plantation economy (3.2-7).

In the 4th grade, students explained the political, economic, and technological factors that led to the exploration of the New World by Spain, Portugal, and England (4-1.1). They summarized the motivation and accomplishments of the Vikings and the Portuguese, Spanish, English, and French explorers (4-1.2). Students summarized the introduction and establishment of slavery in the American colonies, including the role of the slave trade; the nature of the Middle Passage; and the types of goods – rice, indigo, sugar, tobacco, and rum, for example – that were exchanged among the West Indies, Europe, and the Americas (4-2.5).

Previously in 6th grade, students used a map to illustrate the principal routes of exploration and trade between Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas during the age of European exploration (6-6.1).

In the 7th grade, students will use a map or series of maps to identify the colonial expansion of European powers in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas through 1770 (7-7.1).

In the 8th grade, students will demonstrate an understanding of the settlement of South Carolina and the United States by Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans (8-1).

In Global Studies, students will explain the economic and cultural impact of European involvement on other continents during the era of European expansion (GS-4.2).

In US History, students will demonstrate an understanding of the settlement of North America (USHC-1).

It is essential for students to know that the most basic reason for European exploration was the desire to build wealth through increased trade. Based upon their studies of Standard 5, students should understand the rapidly changing political, cultural, and economic structure taking place in Europe at this time and how these changes contributed to the European Age of Exploration. Powerful European nations, ruled by strong monarchs, pursued expanding trade routes in the interests of wealth while advances in technology, such as improved ship design and more sophisticated navigational instruments aided in the race for riches. The initial stimulus was to find water routes to India, China, and other mysterious lands of the East which would result in

enormous trade profits in silks and spices for whichever nation could reach them quickly and efficiently.

As new lands were “discovered” the motivation and nature of interaction among the cultures began to change – especially as applied to specific European nations. For the Portuguese trade continued to dominate their endeavors, though they did build some settlements along the coast of Africa. The Portuguese were the first to develop and exploit the African slave trade. Spanish exploration centered on finding a western route to the Orient and ultimately centered on the exploration and conquest of South America and southern North America. Though the Spanish never developed lucrative trade with the New World they were able to seize great wealth from the region – especially in the form of gold. The French and English focused on attempting to find all-water routes across northern North America and this is the region in which they ultimately focused and settled. The French developed a successful fur trade centered in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Valley. The English more than any other European nation, created permanent settlements (along the Atlantic coast) that developed into a stable, long-term trade relationship.

A second motivator for exploration and settlement, especially among the Spanish, Portuguese, and French, was the opportunity to spread Christianity among non-Europeans peoples. Especially after the Reformation and Counter-Reformation (6-5.6), these Catholic nations saw it as an integral part of their duty to spread their beliefs. England was less interested in spreading Christianity but had a tendency to focus on developing colonies that were committed to specific Christian (Protestant) practices.

Finally, it should be noted that the sense of loyalty to one’s nation and a sense of adventure prompted many Europeans to participate in these explorations. For students the slogan, “God, glory, and gold” can serve as a useful reminder of European motivations. Again, this indicator is an example of a recurring theme [European exploration and settlement] throughout the standards and students should be expected to apply previous learning to the understanding of this indicator.

It is not essential for students to know the details of Columbus’ or any other explorer’s life.

Assessment guidelines: In order to understand the incentives for European exploration and settlement of new lands, appropriate assessments will require the student to **compare** common motivations of exploration and settlement by the various European powers, and to **categorize** these incentives in terms of economic, political, or social objectives. It would be appropriate to incorporate map assessments in which students are asked to **apply** or **analyze** where/why/how European nations explored and settled during this time period.